

# FOREST SPOTLIGHT

Modoc NF – Pacific Southwest Region  
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<http://www.fs.usda.gov/modoc>

## Modoc National Forest Focuses on Recreation Trails

Modoc National Forest is ramping up momentum to maintain and promote recreation trails, with improved efforts starting in 2021. Increases in funding, staffing, partnerships, and community involvement are all part of this initiative. Visitors may have noticed the trail maintenance already, as nearly half of the 127 miles of system trails have been maintained in some fashion since the start of 2021. This is only the beginning!



Figure 1: The 2021 Modoc Student Conservation Association Crew, supported by the Forest Service Pack Stock Center of Excellence, during a hazy summer day in the South Warner Wilderness.

Modoc has received approximately \$1 million specifically for trails work thanks to special funding from the Forest Service Trails Program, along with two selected projects under the Great American Outdoors Act. The implementation of these awards began in the 2021 season with the hiring of a seasonal trails and wilderness technician, as well as hosting a Student Conservation Association 5-person crew. The Forest has already agreed to host SCA crews during the years 2022-2024. Using a portion of the GAOA funding, the Forest will also enter a trail's management partnership agreement with the Pit River Tribe.

Initial priority for groundwork is to complete deferred maintenance, i.e., unaccomplished maintenance, which must be completed to restore facility performance to a normal level. The process is expected to take several years. After achieving progress in this area, trail improvements and even new



Figure 3: Pulaskis and Mcleods are essential multi-function trail tools.

opportunities for trails can be considered. The capacity issue is also a significant challenge. As a result, the Forest has invested in growing and developing partnerships and community support, as well as investing in personnel. We are aware that this spike in funding and Agency attention may not last forever, and only with partners and community involvement can a program of this type be sustainable.



Figure 2: Chris Orr from IMBA Trail Solutions (on right) teaches the workshop group about trail drainage problems and opportunities.

To stimulate community support and involvement in the trails program, the Forest held a community trails workshop. The event on October 29th and 30th was a collaboration with local partners, such as the Back Country Horseman of California High Country Unit, Modoc County Natural Resources, Modoc County Farm Bureau, UC Cooperative Extension, the California Mountain Biking Coalition, International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) Trail Solutions, as well as USDA Forest Service trails and



Figure 4: The workshop group gets hands-on, beginning to shape and excavate a "knick" for trail drainage.

recreation specialists.



Figure 5: Bucking out a downed lodgepole tree with a crosscut saw, South Warner Wilderness.

A representative of IMBA Trail Solutions, Chris Orr, led the workshop. Specifically, this organization strives to conserve and sustain trails and wild places, as well as build and maintain safe multi-use trails for public use both locally and as a destination for visitors in the future. Workshop activities included on-site trail evaluations and classroom instruction, in addition to hands-on trail repair work at Howard's Gulch Trail in the Modoc National Forest. In addition to learning

sustainable practices, participants were also instructed on drainage construction techniques.

Having a diverse group of horseback riders, hikers, and mountain bikers at the workshop was beneficial in providing multiple perspectives and in providing more information about how to manage "multi-use trails." Aside from the South Warner Wilderness, the majority of the trails on the Modoc National Forest are open to equestrians, hikers, and bicyclists. Sustainable development also involves welcoming and collaborating with the various user groups on how trails are built and maintained, including how features can accommodate a variety of users. Local knowledge and industry also plays a role – for example, many visitors from out of the area may be surprised to see cattle on Forest trails. Setting the

right expectations, and always remembering how local agriculture and industry fits in is critical for Modoc.

Greg Nejmanowski, Recreation Lead for the Modoc Forest East Zone, shared, "The opportunity to maintain, improve, and/or expand our multi-use trails across the Modoc NF is an opportunity to stimulate an awareness in the importance of our public lands. It's an opportunity to ignite a passion in youth that could last them a

lifetime, and an opportunity to build community around a recreational resource, a resource that has a forgiving spirit and an unparalleled ability to let us rise above our differences. I will not miss this opportunity, our futures are in need of it!"

Locals interested in getting more involved with Forest trails can reach out to forest engineer Chris Bielecki at [christopher.s.bielecki@usda.gov](mailto:christopher.s.bielecki@usda.gov) or 530-233-8850.



for the greatest good



Figure 6: Participants at the 2021 Modoc Trails Community Workshop.